1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
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the rainbow, which the Panamaka Sumu sometimes call *wulasa ewiwa*, "the devil is vexed." At its appearance the Indians hide their children in the huts so that they may not see it nor point at it; by the latter act the outstretched arm or hand is supposed to become crippled and covered with terrible sores.

Thunder (M.: *alwani;* S.: *alwana*) is sometimes confounded with God among the heathen Miskito and Sumu. According to some, he created the world and governs it by appointing the seasons; others say that he lived formerly on earth and was the first man. When he thunders, it is to warn man that a flood is coming. From an Ulwa Indian, originally from the headwaters of Rio Grande, I obtained the following story, which I propose naming—

The Origin of the Kiawa Rocks

God (*Ma-Papaski*) sent Thunder (*Alwana*) as his representative to the earth to instruct the people in agriculture and in other arts and crafts. One day while Alwana was absent from home an evil spirit, named Kiawa, came and carried off his wife.

A parrot (*warikwa*) informed Thunder of this fact while the latter was planting pine trees on a big rock at a place called to this day *Alwana kumo-ka rumpaki* (in Miskito, *Alwani ki-ni-ka lalkira*). This locality is on Rio Quirguasca, the upper course of Rio Grande; pine-covered rocks and low hills extend there to the very edge of the river.

Upon hearing what had happened, Thunder left his work in order to wrest his wife from Kiawa. He found the latter at his home on Rio Iya, a tributary of Rio Tuma. Kiawa was drunk at the time, but he was a powerful giant, and Thunder was unable to master him at first.

When the fight began Kiawa turned into a boa constrictor (*wyasi*) and swallowed his own wife, in order to prevent her from falling into the hands of Thunder. The two enemies then vied with each other in growing tall, in order to reach the clouds. Each in turn outgrew the other, until finally Thunder's head overtopped the clouds, which enabled him to press his enemy to the ground. With his long machete (*wasni*) he then cut Kiawa in pieces, thereby restoring to life all the people who had been swallowed by the giant. The various parts of the latter turned into rocks which are visible on the upper Rio Iya, and are still known by the name Kiawa. The Indians claim that sometimes these rocks bleed, and that certain parts of the giant, as his head and navel, may still be distinctly seen.[2]

Sirkira.—More powerful than God or the various tribal heroes are the numerous evil spirits (M.: *ulasa, lasa;*[1] T., P.: *wulasa;* U.:

[1] Heath (p. 419) gives a slightly different version of this story.
[2] Dampier (I, 8) already states that the devil is called Wallawa by the Miskito.

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0773 According to a tradition recorded by Grossmann (b: 4) the world was created by two brothers, of whom the elder was named *Papaŧ*.[74] After the hills, lagoons, forests, rivers, and savannas had been brought into existence the two brothers were paddling about the river in a small canoe. In shooting a rapid the canoe capsized and the two creators were thrown into the water and compelled to make for the shore. Feeling cold, they built a fire; and feeling also the pangs of hunger they went into the forest, where they found some maize, which they plucked and roasted. As they made their meal they threw some of the cobs on the ground, where they instantly were transformed into animals; others thrown into the water became fishes, while the remainder stayed in the air as birds. Dumfounded at this sudden manifestation of life around them and the strange shapes which it assumed, they forgot their situation, until *Papaŧ* was brought to a realization of it by coming in contact with the fire, by which he was caught. As he started to burn, he ascended from the earth, rising higher and higher, until his brother could only see him as a large, round, burning spot high up in the sky. He thus became the sun (*sa*). While the younger brother was gazing upward and awaiting the return of *Papaŧ*, he was also lighted up by the treacherous fire and started to rise, but, being unwilling to share the fate of his brother, struggled to maintain his gravity, and thus raised a vast quantity of sparks; but after all he had to give in and go up, accompanied by the sparks, which spread themselves over the firmament, he remaining in the midst of them. Thus were formed the moon (*usiba*) and the stars (*yaia*). The Sumu consider themselves the children of *Papaŧ*, having been formed from his rays.

DELUGE.—The Miskito and Sumu, like many Indian tribes of America, have traditions of a great catastrophe in which a whole country was submerged, only a few people being able to escape to the mountain tops. The following legend, referring to such a deluge, was told to the writer in 1921 by a Panamaka Sumu from the village of Tasbapauni (Rio Prinzapolca):

Two brothers Suko (="bamboo") and Kuru (="cacao pataste," *Theobroma bicolor*) went out fishing to the Cualigua (Kwaliwa) Creek, a tributary of Rio Oconguas (Prinzapolca system). They caught many excellent food fishes of a species known by the Indian names *arik* or *sirik*. Then they had a gigantic river catfish (M.: *kutsi*; S. *suwan*) at the hook. Suko immediately wanted to eat a piece of the latter, but Kuru objected, as it appeared to him to be a sort of spirit. Suko, however, did not listen to his brother, and he roasted a piece of the fish and ate it. But hardly had he finished his meal when he became very thirsty. Having eaten too much, he

[74] *Papaŧ* is the Sumu name for "father."

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could scarcely move, and he asked his brother for some water. The latter did as he was told, but the more Suko drank the thirstier he became, and he kept his brother continually on the run to fetch water. Finally Kuru became tired of this and helped his brother to get to the edge of the creek, so that he might drink as much as he wanted. 773

Arrived at the waterside, Suko lay down on the ground, and reaching with his head down in the water, he kept on drinking without stopping. Gradually his body assumed the shape of a gigantic boa constrictor (M.: wauls; S. wayil), while the head retained its normal size and shape. Kuru became scared and he went home, but did not dare tell anything about what had happened. When the people inquired about his brother, he answered that he was still engaged in fishing and would come a little later.

But the neighbors noticed that something had happened and they made off all together to look for Suko. Arrived at the fishing ground, they found the boa constrictor on the branches of a very high ceiba or silk-cotton tree. But hardly had they perceived him when a big flood came which inundated the whole country. Every one was drowned with the exception of Suko and the latter's wife and children.

CHRISTIANIZATION.—Many women and children who have not been christened carry small crosses, medallions, and scapularies around their neck, which articles they have obtained from passing priests, or bought from Ladino traders. They consider them generally as charms to ward off danger, sickness, poison, and death. By many Indians who have not received any teachings from missionaries baptism is considered often only a sort of magic ceremony to get a new name, drive out the devil, or ward off danger, evil, and the like. Even in the interior, where many Indians pretend to be Catholics, the cult of the saints is often nothing less than a fetish worship. Pictures and statues of the saints take the place of house idols. When the Indians are on the point of committing an act which does not agree with the teachings of the church, the respective images or statuettes are covered up with a cloth, so that the saints are unable to observe them. When they ask the saint for a special favor they make a vow or solemn promise to him and pray during nine consecutive evenings. In case the saint proves unreliable he is sometimes punished by being beaten or beheaded or mutilated in some other way. 777

During the colonial period Spanish missionaries made several attempts to penetrate among the aborigines of the Mosquito Coast, but their efforts were unsuccessful. An account of the activities of these Franciscan monks is given by Conzemius (b: 25–31). Since the last years of the nineteenth century Spanish Capuchins from Barcelona have been established at Bluefields and in several of the 797

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The land of hereafter of the Miskito is far superior to the vale of tears in which we live; it is well stocked with all their favorite game, fish, and other food, as well as drink. Green turtles are plentiful and may easily be caught, and in the forests are large droves of peccaries and monkeys which may be killed at will. Fruit trees are continually in bearing and, like the other food plants there, do not need to be replanted. There are no other people there but Miskito; the paradise is unattainable to Sumu, Rama, Paya, and other tribes, or to foreigners.

JOURNEY TO THE HEREAFTER (MISKITO).—The following story, dealing with the soul's journey to the underworld or paradise, is well known to the Miskito inhabiting the Nicaraguan coast, but not those living on Río Coco and in Honduras.

A Miskito, named *Nakili* or *Nakiki*, had lost his wife whom he loved very much. He went to her grave and there suddenly saw himself in the presence of her disembodied soul (*isiñni*). The latter was only about 2 feet high, and informed him of her starting now her journey to the *Yapti-sisri*.[88] He wished to accompany her, but she told him that such a thing was out of the question, since he was still alive. But he insisted and was not to be persuaded to remain behind, and so they started out together. She led the way and turned into a very narrow trail, which he had never seen before.

They arrived at a place where there were many moths (*sampapa*) flying about. She was afraid of them and did not dare to proceed, but he chased them away and they continued their march.

After a while the trail led between two low pine trees (*ñuas*), which were so close together that the wife could barely pass; the husband, being still in his normal size, was unable to squeeze himself through, but merely walked around this obstacle. According to another version the two trees were constantly moving to and fro, annihilating those persons who had behaved badly on earth. Some again claim that the safe passing of this obstacle was merely a matter of dexterity.

They continued their journey and came to a precipice which was spanned by a bridge of the width of a human hair. Below there was a huge pot of boiling water attended by *sikla* birds. The wife being of reduced size and weight was able to walk over this narrow bridge, but *Nakiki* did not find the distance across very great, and so he jumped it.

Then they arrived at a very large river, where there was a canoe paddled by four toads (*sukiki*).[89] This stream swarmed with a small variety of fish, similar to a sardine, and called *blim* (or *bilim*, *bilam*),

[88] Lit.: "Mother-scorpion," a sort of personified hereafter and heretofore.
[89] According to some Indians this canoe was paddled by a dog.

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which the soul took for sharks (*ilili*). On the opposite side they saw the country of the *Yapti-misri;* every one there appeared to be happy. The souls of those persons who had not led a righteous life were upset with the boat and devoured by the sardines. The wife was taken over in the canoe by the toads, while he managed to swim over.

On the other side they were received by the *Yapti-misri*, a very tall, stout woman with many breasts, to whom the inhabitants came occasionally to suck like babies. She appeared to be rather angry at *Nakili* for having come, and ordered him to go back to the earth again. He implored her to let him remain, as he loved his wife so much and did not wish to be separated from her. She agreed finally to let him stay.

In this country no one had to work; there was plenty of excellent food and drink, and there was no lack of amusements. But after staying there for some time, *Nakili* longed to go back to earth, in order to see his children again. *Yapti-misri* allowed him to go on condition that he would never return to the hereafter until after his death. She placed him in a huge bamboo rod which she deposited on the river. After a while he noticed from the high waves that he was on the sea, and finally a gigantic breaker threw him on the shore, just in front of his own hut.

JOURNEY TO THE HEREAFTER (SUMU).—After death the soul undertakes its pilgrimage to *Obul* or *Ubul* (lit.: "mottled dwelling"), that is, the paradise, which is situated under the earth toward the east, where the sun rises.

On its journey the soul is attacked by macaws (*dā ees*) and moths (*tapam yula*) which attempt to bite it; it defends itself with the aid of two sticks of wood tied together with cotton thread in the shape of a cross, and which are always joined to the deceased person before burial.

Then the soul is met by a gigantic worm, which devours the women who have not always been faithful to their husbands. Men are not molested by this monster, as they make themselves invulnerable by attaching to the body a coat of cockles (*ulamak*).

The road then leads along the abode of a small black lizard living on trees, and called *kasā*, which tries to catch the soul and deliver it to a toad (*muku*); the latter has a large pot with boiling water on the fire, and throws all the bad people therein. But the soul may easily escape from final destruction by offering some beads to the *kasā*, who is very fond of such ornaments, and by giving likewise some small present to the toad.

The next stage is a high, slippery hill, called *Uy Asaś*, which has to be climbed. The relatives of the deceased smear the soles of his feet with beeswax (*balas*) in order to facilitate his ascending the hill.

2: Kirchhoff E-4 (no date) 1948
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is an elaboration of aboriginal customs, encouraged by the English. Early records indicate that the *Sumo*, *Paya*, and *Jicaque* developed similar but perhaps less complicated organizations in order to resist the Spanish Conquest. Probably they too had waged war previous to the 16th century, but available data do not permit identification of aboriginal customs.

Among the *Mosquito* and *Sumo* all men were potential warriors. They were arranged according to military ranks, which were distinguished by feather insignia. The warriors, particularly of the *Sumo*, were subject to severe tests including dietary restrictions, and they celebrated various ceremonies. Women were not permitted to attend these ceremonies, and the warriors were not supposed to have any relations with women. Before a battle shamans were consulted. The warriors, painted black, usually attacked the enemy at night. The *Mosquito* took prisoners to be sold as slaves to the Whites. The *Sumo* killed as many of the enemy as possible. They mutilated the corpses and wore the teeth and fingernails as trophies. Some of the *Sumo* reputedly ate the roasted flesh of their enemies in order to inflict further insult upon them and to make sure that they were completely destroyed.

ESTHETIC AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Dances and music.—All ceremonies are the time for much intoxication, dancing, and singing. On frequent occasions the *Mosquito* sing in groups or singly. There are many kinds of dances, some of them specially for women and others for particular ceremonies. There are two types of drums: a goblet-shaped drum used in funeral and memorial ceremonies and a drum of European origin which is used in some of the ceremonies and, perhaps, as a signal drum. Conch-shell trumpets and reed or bone flutes with one to four stops are blown. *Sumo* and *Mosquito* shamans use flutes 6 feet (2 m.) long. The musical bow, with or without a gourd sounding box, is played by women. Gourd rattles are also used.

RELIGION

The *Sumo*, *Mosquito*, and *Paya* believe in a deity, called "Our Father," who lives in the sky. He is little interested in mankind, is too far removed to be approached by humans, and has little influence upon human affairs. The sun, moon, and stars, especially the Pleiades, are considered to be supernatural beings. They figure in the mythology and are of some significance in the religious philosophy. Solar and lunar eclipses, thunder, wind, the rainbow, and other celestial phenomena are explained by myths. The last three are the agents of the major deities.

A *Sumo* creation myth recounts the activities of two brothers who made the animals out of maize cobs. People are believed to have been made from rays of the sun. The *Paya* believe that their god sowed men in the

2: Kirchhoff E-4 (no date) 1948
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same way that manioc is planted. Some of the tribes recount a myth of a great flood. The *Jicaque* believe in two benevolent deities and a female god of evil. No offerings are made to the "good" deities, but attempts are made to placate the "evil" one, a female who is responsible for all misfortune and who causes death.

The *Sumo* and *Mosquito* and possibly the *Paya* believe that after death the soul makes its way eastward over a difficult route to a nether world of plenty and happiness. The description of the route traveled and the acts performed by the survivors of the deceased to aid the progress of his soul on this road differ from tribe to tribe. Under certain conditions the soul may remain about the house of the deceased and even occupy his former belongings, including domestic animals. For this reason these things must be destroyed.

The *Sumo*, *Mosquito*, and *Paya* believe that the world is populated with innumerable spirits. These haunt hills, caves, deep pools of water, and other places, and they are responsible for most misfortunes including sickness and death. A large part of the work of shamans is to placate these spirits, to drive them out of sick people, and otherwise to destroy them. Protection from the bad spirits is afforded by amulets and charms.

SHAMANISM

Most *Sumo* and *Mosquito* settlements have a shaman, who may take part in secular affairs but whose chief duty is to cure the sick. Shamans possess some spiritual power, but very little is known of the various rituals through which it is acquired. Sons and sometimes sons-in-law may succeed a shaman. Curing varies in detail according to the individual shaman and the spirits addressed. A shaman goes into a trance in which he contacts the spirits and, in one way or another, drives them out of the afflicted person. Curing rituals also include songs, dances, and the use of painted sticks, carved figures, and other paraphernalia. Some diseases are cured by the imposition of diets, the prohibition of sexual intercourse, and other restrictions. Complicated diseases or village-wide epidemics are isolated and receive special medical and ceremonial treatment. Infections, snake bites, and diseases such as malaria are cured by both shamans and laymen, the latter using infusions of herbs and a large number of native medicines. Steam baths followed by a cold plunge are also employed. Baths in hot springs and partial burial in hot sand are common practices, especially among the *Sumo*. When surgery is necessary a shaman employs knives made of obsidian, flint, bone, and such. Ashes, tobacco, wax, and resin are used as antiseptics.

A shaman may also prophesy the future or determine the route hunters should take in order to find game. By conjuring, a shaman may cause harm to come to people. A shaman may be retained by a person to eliminate an enemy.

2: Kirchhoff E-4 (no date) 1948
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MYTHOLOGY

The literature, reported mainly from the *Mosquito* and *Sumo*, includes the many songs. An extensive folklore includes stories of the chase, of fishing, and of war. Quasi-historical tales speak of mysterious tribes who preceded the present inhabitants in the region. A migration legend says that the former home of the *Mosquito* and *Sumo* was on the Isthmus of Rivas. The *Sumo* version of a creation legend recounts the common origin of the *Mosquito* and *Sumo*.

LORE AND LEARNING

Rules of etiquette are elaborate even in everyday life. Time may be measured by the number of knots on a string or by pebbles placed in a gourd. The year was formerly divided into 13 months, the last of which was occasionally dropped in order to keep the months in adjustment with the seasons. The *Mosquito* and *Sumo* employ a vigesimal numerical system.

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